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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a study that examined the relationship between acculturation and socioeconomic status (SES) on two scales of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Adolescent (MMPI-A) for Hispanic adolescents (N=65). The study hypothesized that higher levels of acculturation and SES in Hispanic adolescents would be related to scale L (Lie) and related directly to scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity) of the MMPI-A. The study also hypothesized that acculturation and SES would not differ in their relative contributions to Scales 1 and 5. The findings did not support the inverse relationship between levels of acculturation, SES, and Scale L; nor did they support the direct relationship between levels of acculturation, SES, and Scale 5. These findings are contrary to research findings with Hispanic adults and the MMPI and MMPI-2. The results suggest that low acculturated and low SES Hispanic adolescents in this sample responded with an appropriate balance between admitting and denying minor social faults. While there exists a common traditional belief in the Hispanic culture that a person does not ask for help and does not discuss problems outside the home, the clinical implications of these findings suggest that Hispanic adolescents may be more accepting of seeking help, perhaps even seeking mental health services. (MKA)

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ACCULTURATION, SES, AND THE MMPI-A PERFORMANCE OF HISPANIC ADOLESCENTS

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INTRODUCTION

A review of the Hispanic MMPI literature revealed an inverse relationship between higher levels of acculturation and SES and Scale L (Lie) and a direct relationship between lower levels of acculturation and SES and Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity). Elevations on Scale L (Lie) suggest that less acculturated Hispanics are less willing to reveal psychological distress and adhere to strict moral and religious principals. Lower elevations on Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity) suggest that less acculturated Hispanics adhere to rigid gender roles. Many authors suggest that this may be a genuine characteristic of the Hispanic culture (Lucio, Reyes-Lagunes, Scott, 1994; Montgomery & Orozco, 1985; Reilley & Knight, 1970).

The present study examined the relationship between acculturation and SES on Scales L (Lie) and 5 (Masculinity-Femininity) of the MMPI-A for an Hispanic adolescent sample. This study hypothesized that higher levels of acculturation and SES in Hispanic adolescents would be related inversely to Scale L (Lie) and related directly to Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity) of the MMPI-A. This study also hypothesized that acculturation and SES would not differ in their relative contributions to Scales L (Lie) and 5 (Masculinity-Femininity).

METHODS

Sixty-five Hispanic adolescents from three San Francisco Bay Area high schools participated in this study by completing a confidential demographic questionnaire, Scale 1 of the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II: Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995), and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Adolescent (MMPI-A).

All of the demographic information was coded to obtain descriptive statistics. Acculturation was measured by Scale 1 of the ARSMA-II (Cuellar et al., 1995), and SES was measured by the Hollingshead and Redlich (1958) Two-Factor Index. An acculturation and SES

score was obtained for each student. The MMPI-A was computer scored and raw score were converted to *T*-Scores for the seven Validity and ten Clinical Scales. Multiple regression analyses were used to test for the relationship between level of acculturation, SES, and Scale L (Lie) and Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity).

The sample consisted of 29 males and 36 females between the ages of 14 and 19 (M = 16.3, SD = 1.6). Seventy-seven percent identified as Mexican, twenty percent identified as Central American, and three percent identified as South American. The majority of students ranked in the low SES (69 percent) and low acculturation (68 percent) groups.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the correlation coefficients for Scale L (Lie), Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity), acculturation, and SES for the Hispanic adolescent sample (N = 65). The findings of this study do not support the inverse relationship between level of acculturation and Scale L (Lie), r = -.17, or level of SES and Scale L (Lie), r = -.22. The findings of this study also do not support the direct relationship between level of acculturation and Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity), r = -.27, or level of SES Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity), r = .03.

A *Z*-test for testing the significance of the difference between independent r's revealed no difference between acculturation and SES on Scale L (Lie) and no difference between acculturation and SES on Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity). However, there was a significant negative correlation between the combination of acculturation and SES and Scale L (Lie), r = -.36, $p < .05$, but not for Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity). Although not statistically significant, acculturation was found to be a stronger variable than SES for Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity).

Table 2 provides the means and standard deviations by level of acculturation for the

Table 1

Correlation Coefficients Between Scale L (Lie), Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity) and Acculturation and SES

Scale	Acculturation	SES	Acculturation and SES	*p*
Scale L (Lie)	-.17	-.22	-.36*	.02*
Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity)	-.27	.03	-.29	.10

*$p < .05$ (1 tailed).

MMPI-A Validity and Clinical Scales and Table 3 provides the means and standard deviations by level of SES for the MMPI-A Validity and Clinical Scales.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study do not support the inverse relationship between level of acculturation and SES and Scale L (Lie). The findings also do not support the direct relationship between level of acculturation and SES and Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity).

The findings of this study are contrary to research finding with Hispanic adults and the MMPI and MMPI-2. The results suggest that low acculturated and low SES Hispanic adolescents in this sample responded with an appropriate balance between admitting and denying minor social faults (Archer, 1997). While there exists a common traditional belief in the Hispanic culture that a person does not ask for help and does not discuss problems outside the home, the clinical implications of these finding suggests that Hispanic adolescents may be more accepting of seeking help, perhaps even seeking mental health services. Especially as mental health services become more accessible and culturally competent for the Hispanic community.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviation by Level of Acculturation for the MMPI-A Validity and Clinical Scales

	Low Acculturation		Bicultural	
Scale	M	SD	M	SD
VRIN	51.8	8.1	50.6	7.4
TRIN	58.9[a]	6.7	53.2[b]	7.0
F1	51.1	9.3	49.2	8.8
F2	50.9	9.8	50.8	10.9
F	51.0	9.5	50.1	10.3
L	57.8	11.1	56.9	11.9
K	48.7	9.2	50.5	11.5
1 (Hs)	52.6	9.7	52.8	10.5
2 (D)	53.3	10.6	51.8	8.8
3 (Hy)	48.2	10.7	50.2	8.0
4 (Pd)	51.3	8.8	48.9	8.9
5 (Mf)	51.8	11.6	51.6	11.1
6 (Pa)	51.5	10.9	49.6	8.1
7 (Pt)	52.2	10.4	51.1	13.4
8 (Sc)	52.0	9.4	51.9	12.9
9 (Ma)	52.0	9.1	56.6	14.8
0 (Si)	52.0	8.2	49.7	11.5

Note. Means with different superscripts exceed a 5 *T*-score point difference.

Previous research findings suggested that Hispanic adult males respond with a masculine emphasis and Hispanic adult females respond with a feminine emphasis. The results of this study suggest that the low acculturated and low SES Hispanic adolescents in this sample do not rigidly adhere to traditional gender roles. These finding suggests that Hispanic adolescents may be more accepting of egalitarian gender roles and relationships.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviation by Level of SES for the MMPI-A Validity and Clinical Scales

	Low SES		Middle SES	
Scale	M	SD	M	SD
VRIN	51.6	7.6	50.2	9.0
TRIN	59.3	7.3	58.0	5.4
F1	51.4	9.3	48.8	7.8
F2	52.2[a]	10.2	46.8[b]	7.8
F	52.0	9.8	47.6	7.8
L	54.2[a]	10.9	63.9[b]	9.0
K	46.7[a]	8.4	54.5[b]	11.6
1 (Hs)	54.4[a]	9.4	47.3[b]	10.1
2 (D)	53.8[a]	8.7	46.4[b]	5.3
3 (Hy)	49.3	8.5	46.1	6.3
4 (Pd)	53.0[a]	8.6	45.5[b]	7.0
5 (Mf)	52.4	11.0	52.4	12.3
6 (Pa)	52.6[a]	10.4	46.3[b]	7.6
7 (Pt)	54.9[a]	11.0	43.8[b]	8.8
8 (Sc)	54.3[a]	10.4	45.1[b]	8.9
9 (Ma)	53.9	10.8	55.0	10.6
0 (Si)	53.0	8.4	45.8	10.6

Note. Means with different superscripts exceed a 5 *T*-score point difference.

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